

PRESS RELEASE

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Driving With The Stars...

Vote (*Early & Often*) For GA DOT's DDI As People's Choice Transportation Award Winner And Help Fund Deserving College Students' Educations

ATLANTA - The Georgia Department of Transportation knew its innovative Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) at Interstate Highway 285 and Ashford Dunwoody Road would help improve traffic flow at the always-crowded North Dekalb County location. But we had no idea it might also help fund the college educations of deserving Georgia college students.

The DDI – Georgia's first – is competing to be named by the public in online voting as *The People's Choice* for the Nation's Best Transportation Project. And the best part – if it wins, a \$10,000 award to the Department's Scholarship Fund will be made by the contest-sponsoring American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Online voting began last week and continues through Wednesday, Oct. 2, at www.AmericasTransportationAwards.org. Individuals are permitted to vote for the DDI up to 10 times per day. The People's Choice Award and a Grand Prize Award decided by judges will be presented at AASHTO's Oct. 20, annual meeting in Denver.

This was a great project," Georgia DOT Commissioner Keith Golden notes. "It was innovative; it allowed us to partner with the very committed and resourceful PCID business community in the area to best meet its needs and has proven to be very effective in relieving congestion. That it now also has the potential to allow us to assist college students pursue their education is a wonderful added benefit."

A collaborative effort of Georgia DOT and the Perimeter Community Improvement Districts (PCID) – the DDI is competing against nine other projects from around the

country. “The 10 projects competing for top honors have made incredible impacts on their communities,” says Bud Wright, AASHTO executive director. “The America’s Transportation Awards competition was created in 2008 to highlight all that our state transportation departments do each day to deliver quality, impactful transportation projects ahead of schedule, under their projected budgets, and through exceptional innovation. We are very proud of these state DOTs and their outstanding projects.”

The DDI, only the seventh in the United States, switches Ashford Dunwoody traffic from the (traditional U.S.) right lanes configuration on the bridge to left lanes. Doing so provides simpler and safer ingress to and egress from the interstate. The project earlier received a regional award in the AASHTO competition – securing first place in the Southeast in the Ahead of Schedule, Small Project category. Since the DDI opened to traffic last year, the 55,000 vehicles that use the interchange daily have done so with fewer accidents and at an average of 24 percent quicker.

Georgia DOT’s Scholarship Program, now in its fourth year, awards stipends annually to college students actively pursuing degrees in transportation-related fields of study. (The scholarships are not funded with motor fuel tax revenues.)

The Georgia Department of Transportation is committed to providing a safe, seamless and sustainable transportation system that supports Georgia’s economy and is sensitive to both its citizens and its environment. For general information on the Georgia DOT, please visit <http://www.dot.ga.gov>; you also may follow the Department on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaDOT) ([http://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaDOT](https://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaDOT)) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/gadepotrans) ([http://twitter.com/gadepotrans](https://twitter.com/gadepotrans)).

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In FY 2012, Georgia DOT, the lead agency for the Georgia Unified Certification Program (GUCP), certified 531 new firms as disadvantaged business enterprises (DBEs). The GUCP certification provides these firms with the chance to secure significant economic development opportunities with GDOT and other state and federal government agencies. Currently, there are 1,718 certified DBE firms appearing in the GUCP directory.

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